

GREEN CART CHRONICLE

An Update from the City of Newton DPW Sustainable Materials Management Division

SUMMER 2019

RECYCLING IS STILL ALIVE

China's import restrictions have been sensationalized as the end of recycling in major news outlets since early 2018. This stems from the policy change from China that banned the import of most recyclable materials unless they meet the strict contamination rate of less than 0.5%.

It is true that global recyclables markets have been significantly disrupted. Recyclers had to seek out new buyers and prices have tumbled. This has left many wondering whether or not we should continue to recycle. Fear not ! Recycling is still alive!

Despite concerns over the reduced demand for recyclables, it is important to remember that the recycling industry is based on commodity markets which are cyclical. Over the last 50 years, commodity prices have both increased and decreased. Each time prices dropped, the media proclaimed the death of recycling. However, each time, recycling markets revived and grew stronger.

China's policy has resulted in the diversion of recyclable materials to other markets and has also led to recent private sector investments in domestic paper and plastic mills. Moving forward, please continue to reduce, then reuse, and then recycle all accepted materials to ensure the conservation of natural resources. Plus, it still costs less in Newton to recycle than to put things in the trash.

When in doubt, throw it out!

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RECYCLING TIP:

TRASH BLACK PLASTIC CONTAINERS

Black plastic containers blend in with black conveyor belts that help sort materials.



Trash the black plastic takeout box, recycle the lid.



Reuse or trash black plastic plant pots.

The optical sorters that identify the resin type of plastic containers can't "see" the black plastic, which means black plastic can end up in the wrong bale, where it is considered contamination.

Therefore, avoid or reuse black plastic items when possible. When discarding, place them in the trash.

The clear lid on black takeout containers is recyclable.

GOOD LUCK, CONNI!

DPW SAYS GOODBYE TO
WASTE DIVERSION
COORDINATOR



Conni Melia, Newton's first Waste Diversion Coordinator, is moving on to a position with the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Conni has been serving Newton for just over 2 years, part-time until recently, but in that short tenure has made a lasting impact.

All of DPW's waste educational materials have been created or enhanced by Conni, including this Green Cart Chronicle newsletter. The DPW Sustainable Materials Management website was overhauled in Summer 2017, with Conni rebuilding the new pages. The success of the Recycling IQ program in Fall 2018 would not have been possible without Conni's administrative skills behind the scenes (and on the street). And the list could go on and on.

Thank you for your contribution, Conni! Good luck in your new role.

YARD WASTE COLLECTION

Yard waste collection began on March 25th and will end on December 13th, weather permitting. Collection occurs weekly in 2019 on your assigned collection day. Place yard waste in your own barrel(s) or use paper yard waste bags. Yard waste (along with trash and recycling carts) must be at the curb no later than 7AM on your collection day or as early as 4PM the day before. See the accepted and not accepted lists below. Learn more about managing yard waste [here](#).

Accepted Materials

- Grass clippings
- Leaves
- Tree and Shrub Prunings
- Wood Chips
- Small Vegetable and Flower Plants
- Other Vegetative Matter
- Twigs and Branches less than 4' long and 6" inches in diameter

Bag or barrel must not exceed 50 gallons or 50 pounds.

Not Accepted

- Plastic Bags
- Dirt
- Sand
- Rocks
- Asphalt
- Brick
- Concrete

Yard waste set out in plastic bags or cardboard boxes will be rejected.

Last School Connections Meeting of the School Year

School Connections, a subgroup of **Green Newton** that brings together parents and teachers interested in advancing sustainability in Newton Public Schools, will hold its last meeting of the school year on Thursday, May 23rd at 3:45pm in the Newton Free Library's 3rd floor rear arc. Join us before we wrap up for the summer!



HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENTS

Household hazardous waste (HHW) includes any household chemicals. HHW should not be disposed of in the trash, flushed down the drain, poured into storm drains or onto the ground.

Bring any hazardous products you want to get rid of to any HHW collection event held at the Resource Recovery Center at 115 Rumford Ave.

HHW events are held the first Saturday and third Thursday of each month April-December at the Newton Resource Recovery Center, located at 115 Rumford Ave in Newton. For more information, check out our [webpage](#) and [HHW brochure](#).

BE IN THE KNOW ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS



Download *Recycle Right Newton* to set HHW collection event reminders. Available free in the App Store and Google Play Store.

Items Accepted at Collection Events



Common Household Chemicals

Cleaners, aerosols, solvents, pest control,
floor & furniture polishes, disinfectants,
houseplant chemicals, spot remover,
silver & copper polish



Outdoor Products

Pesticides, herbicides,
fungicides, fertilizers, pool
chemicals, rodent killers



Auto Products

Gasoline (we can empty and return your container), waxes, polishes



Flammable Paint Products

Oil & lead based paints (not latex), stain, varnish, thinners, adhesives



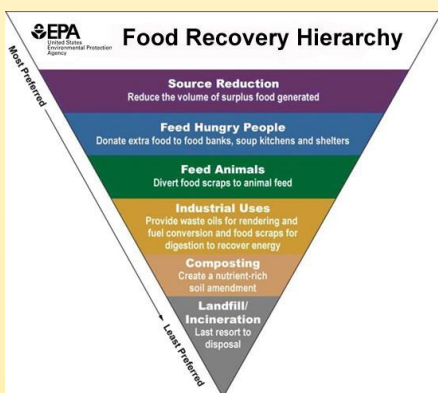
Miscellaneous

Nail polish & remover, adhesives, mothballs, artist & hobby supplies, photo chemicals, chemistry sets, flea collars and flea shampoos

ANAEROBIC DIGESTION VS COMPOSTING

Composting is a natural degradation process. The breakdown of organic matter occurs over time from exposure to oxygen, moisture, and naturally occurring bacteria. The result of the process is a humus material called compost.

Anaerobic digestion is a biological process by which microorganisms break down biodegradable material in the absence of oxygen, producing carbon dioxide and methane gas. The process is used for industrial or domestic purposes to reduce waste solids and produce renewable fuel that can be captured and used, offsetting the use of fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The remaining solids are then composted.



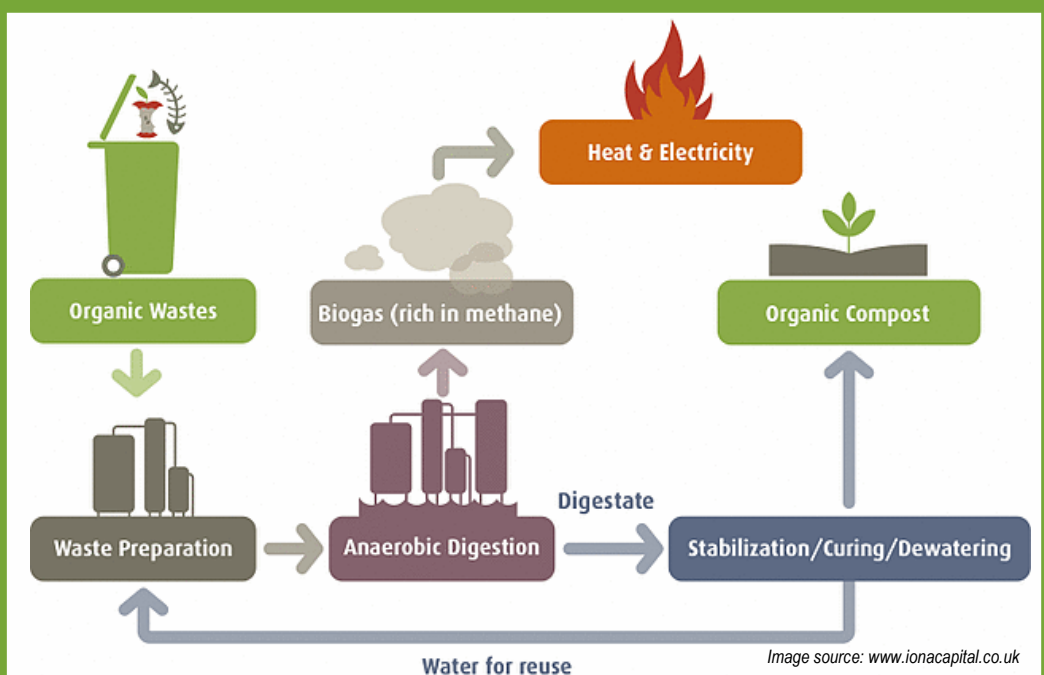
The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ranks anaerobic digestion as a higher use than composting. Find out why [here](#).

ORGANICS COLLECTION PILOT IN NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In January 2019, organics collection was launched in the cafeteria of two Newton schools, Angier Elementary School and Zervas Elementary School. Each lunch period, students sort their waste into three categories of waste: trash, recycling, and organics. Organic material includes food waste, napkins, and other compostable material.

The organic material is hauled from the schools by a vendor to Charlestown, MA. The Charlestown facility turns the food waste into a slurry that is then anaerobically digested at a wastewater treatment facility. Anaerobic digestion is a process through which the organic material mass is reduced, producing methane gas, which is then used to generate energy. Solids remaining after anaerobic digestion are composted.

DPW is working with NPS to add organics diversion in up to 12 more schools in the 2019-2020 school year.



LIBRARY OF THINGS

Are you looking to learn a new musical instrument? Or try out a piece of technology? Or test out a board game with friends? The concept of "try before you buy" is a form of waste reduction gaining popularity. Reduce items bound for the waste stream at home by borrowing them from the Library of Things collection at the Newton Free Library!

[Newton Free Library](#) hosts a collection of items available for check-out and in-library use. The library offers a Library of Things as part of fulfilling its mission to bring the community together to enjoy, explore, create, and discover. The Library of Things encourages patrons of all ages to express their passions and exercise their creativity using borrowed items, which can offset the cost of starting a new hobby.

Items in this collection include musical instruments, board games & puzzles, a metal detector, 3D printers, a digital film scanner, wire strippers, speakers and more. Visit the online [catalog](#) for a complete list of items. More items coming soon!

WHY BUILD A LIBRARY OF THINGS?

A Library of Things, sometimes also called a "Tool Library," is designed to expand a community's understanding of what a library can offer to the public.

These non-traditional collections go beyond books, journals, and multimedia that have been the primary focus of library collections in modern times. Oftentimes, these collections house items that are used infrequently that can be shared amongst community members. Ultimately, this reduces a resident's need to purchase items while saving resources.

BORROWING GUIDELINES

Library of Things items do not get sent in delivery to other libraries.

If you are a Newton resident you can reserve these items through the library catalog.

If you don't live in Newton, you can still request these items, as long as you ask a staff member to place the request, and you come to Newton Free Library to pick it up.



For the majority of library materials, the loan rules are:

- 3 Week Initial Loan Period
- Up to 2 Renewals as long as no reserves are pending
- Late items are assessed an overdue fee of 15 cents, up to a maximum of \$6.

NEWTON'S FIRST FIX-IT CLINIC HELD

The Newton Recycling Committee organized and held Newton's first Fix-It Clinic on June 1, with support from the Newton Free Library and Newton DPW. It was a great success!



Johnny Amlie, 14, shows off the digital clock he repaired as a volunteer fixer during the event.

Photo credit:
Susan Legere

The Fix-It Clinic was held in the Makerspace at the Newton Free Library. Volunteer "fixers" were on hand to assist with fabric items, jewelry, small electronics, and bikes. About 50 items were brought in for repair. There was a 50% success rate at fixing items, to which Miles Smith, Chair of the Recycling Committee, said "I felt that no one left unhappy. Everyone felt we had given [the repair] a serious try...and everyone left wiser, with a better understanding of how things work, electric safety, and how to analyze problems."



The Newton Recycling Committee is planning the next Fix-It Clinic for September 2019.

Find more information on [Fixit Clinics](#). We need folks that want to help fix stuff! [Email us](#).

SWAP SHOP UPDATE

[Newton's Swap Shop](#) has expanded its operating hours this year. The Swap Shop will now be open on Fridays and Saturdays, from 8am-1pm May through October at the rear of the Newton Resource Recovery Center, located at 115 Rumford Ave.

The Swap Shop launched in September 2018. Its goal is to reduce the amount of usable, working items that enter the waste stream and continue their useful life. Newton residents are encouraged to drop off clean, usable items or come take something they can use for themselves at no cost.



The Swap Shop volunteer crew with Mayor Ruthanne Fuller at the Swap Shop Opening in September 2018.

Photo credit: Jonathan Yeo

The Swap Shop needs volunteers! Join the Newton Swap Shop volunteer team! [Email us](#) for more information.

Swap Shop Drop Off Rules

The Swap Shop does not accept these items:



Large or upholstered furniture



Building Materials



Large appliances



TVs or Computer Monitors

All items must be approved by a volunteer before being dropped off. View our [accepted items list](#) and [guidelines](#).

